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Item 78 (c) of the provisional agenda*
Review of the implementation of the recommendations and decisions adopted by the General Assembly at its tenth special session: Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters

Work of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters held its thirty-second and thirty-third sessions at Geneva from 20 to 22 January 1999 and in New York from 28 to 30 June 1999, respectively.

The Board formulated advice and recommendations to the Secretary-General on topical disarmament and arms control issues: (a) the situation of the United Nations Special Commission; (b) conventional disarmament in Europe; (c) disarmament contributions to African security; (d) tactical nuclear weapons; (e) a ban on the production of fissile material for weapons purposes; (f) biological weapons; (g) missile defences; and (h) the situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. A summary of the Board's discussions is included in the present report.

The Board made a recommendation to the Secretary-General on the improvements of the language of its 1982 mandate, with which the Secretary-General concurred and forwards to the General Assembly for approval.

The Board also held a focused discussion away from Headquarters on 1 and 2 July 1999 on disarmament and international security in the twenty-first century, as a contribution to the report under preparation by the Secretary-General for the Millennium Summit in September 2000. The summary of that discussion was forwarded to the Secretary-General directly and is not included in the present report.

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As is customary, the Board met with representatives of the Special NGO Committee on Disarmament (Geneva) at its thirty-second session and of the Special NGO Committee on Disarmament (New York) at its thirty-third session.

The work of the Board in its capacity as Board of Trustees of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) is contained in a separate report to the General Assembly (A/54/201).

I. Introduction

1. The Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters* held its thirty-second and thirty-third sessions at Geneva, from 20 to 22 January 1999, and in New York, from 28 to 30 June 1999, respectively. This present report is submitted pursuant to Assembly resolution 38/183 O of 20 December 1983. The report of the Board on its work as Board of Trustees for the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) has been presented in a separate document (A/54/201). The Board's sessions were chaired by Thérèse Delpech, Director for Strategic Affairs of the Atomic Energy Commission (Paris).

2. Below are some of the salient points of the Board's deliberations during the two sessions and the specific recommendations it conveyed to the Secretary-General.

3. The Board also held a focused discussion away from Headquarters on 1 and 2 July and presented its views on disarmament and international security in the twenty-first century in a separate communication from the Chairman to the Secretary-General to assist him in the preparation of his report to the Millennium Summit in September 2000.

A. The situation of the United Nations Special Commission

4. The Board held an animated discussion on the work of the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) in Iraq based on an informal paper prepared by the Executive Chairman of the Commission, Ambassador Rolf Ekéus, underlining several points for the attention of the Secretary-General. Recognizing that, owing to exceptional circumstances, Iraq was the subject of a unique sanctions regime established under chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, the Board nevertheless stressed the importance of ridding Iraq of its weapons of mass destruction; of Iraq's full compliance with relevant Security Council resolutions; and the grave regional and international consequences of Iraq's persistent non-compliance.

5. The Board was not in a position to assess the extent of what remained concealed in the field of weapons of mass destruction, but the fact that the actual biological and chemical Iraq programme did not correspond to Iraqi declarations or to the findings of the inspectors was not challenged.

6. The Board underlined that unilateral actions should be avoided by all parties concerned and that Iraq's decision not to comply with the Security Council resolutions was the first regrettable unilateral step.

7. A broad majority of members considered that a change was now necessary as to make it possible to resume effective verification activities in Iraq. Agreement on the exact nature and scope of this change was nonetheless lacking. Some general guidelines for any future regime were put forward by the Board: it should preserve the basic hard-earned, well-established operations of the system put in place in 1991; it should enjoy wide international support; and it should find the means to renew cooperation with Iraq. Some members questioned the system whereby inspectors were paid by their own Governments.

B. Conventional disarmament in Europe

8. The Board heard and exchanged views on a discussion paper by Jane Sharp, Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for Defence Studies in London, on the possibilities of using the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe as a model for disarmament and confidence- and security-building measures in other regions. While the Board acknowledged that regional security patterns were always unique and that no model could be copied for that reason, it nonetheless believed that general conclusions could be drawn from the successes and failures of other regional efforts. More than a model, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) process could be a source of inspiration to other regions in the field of conventional disarmament.

9. That was particularly the case because the OSCE process had begun in the context of the most impressive political, ideological and military confrontation known in human history, with a large part of Europe occupied by Soviet forces and a high level of distrust on both sides.

10. Important features of the disarmament/confidence and security-building measures aspects of the OSCE process could be built upon, including the possibility of reducing the likelihood of large-scale attack; the importance of transparency measures concerning the size and operational practices of the military forces; the role confidence and security-building measures could play in the improvement of the political process; and the necessary adaptation of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe to changing conditions.

* Members of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters are listed in the annex to the present document.

11. The Board discussed the possible inspirations drawn from the OSCE process that could be applied in the Mediterranean region and the Middle East, the Korean Peninsula, the Asia-Pacific region and South Asia. One of the main lessons of the peace and security process in Europe, it was stated, was its comprehensiveness, in that it involves political, economic and military dimensions.

C. Disarmament contributions to African security

12. Cognizant of the fact that conflicts on the African continent were of major concern to the United Nations and the Secretary-General, the Board also debated how disarmament was contributing to security in Africa. Rokiatou N'diaye Keita, Director of the International Institute for Peace and Security in Bamako, presented an informal paper on the subject, which underlined, *inter alia*, the necessity of the support of the international community for the moratorium on the import and export of small arms in West Africa.

13. The Board agreed that the great variety of conflicts in Africa deserved a broad range of analyses. The frequent combination of inter-State conflicts and heightened tensions that threaten the internal cohesion of the States concerned presented a particularly difficult situation. Efficient mechanisms to prevent, manage or solve those conflicts were lacking.

14. From that perspective, the few successful processes, such as the moratorium in West Africa, were particularly valuable experiences, though the Board entertained no illusions about the validity of this initiative to deal with the numerous and tragic security problems of the region.

15. A greater emphasis was called for on the supply side of weapons transfers. Additional studies within the United Nations system on this subject were suggested. The suppliers of small arms pay more attention in cases where the recipients exercise some form of control over the weapons they receive. Support was also expressed for joint customs cooperation, joint surveillance of border traffic and the sharing of information and data.

16. The "security-first" approach (security integrated with development and the main objective of disarmament) was recognized as a useful conceptual contribution to African security. Such a global vision was felt necessary in order for the Board to make more substantial recommendations.

D. Tactical nuclear weapons

17. At its January session, the Board discussed the issue of tactical (sub-strategic) nuclear weapons, based on an informal paper by William Potter, Director of the Center for Non-proliferation Studies in Monterey, California, who also updated the Board on developments related to these types of weapons in June, suggesting several ways to raise the level of knowledge about this problem (see below). In its exchange, the Board took the following four elements into account: the current deadlock concerning disarmament of strategic nuclear weapons made it all the more important and timely to discuss tactical nuclear weapons; such weapons were still not being addressed by any negotiating process; they were present in large numbers; and they posed specific problems in terms of the doctrines concerning their use. For those reasons, the Board conveyed to the Secretary-General the need for increased international attention to this issue.

18. As there was no agreed definition of such weapons outside the United States-Russian Federation context, it would be necessary to reach agreement on a definition of tactical nuclear weapons if disarmament discussions or negotiations were extended to additional States.

19. In dealing with tactical nuclear weapons, a number of approaches could be examined: transparency measures concerning the number or location of deployed or non-deployed weapons; a freeze in the deployment of all the available weapons; a formalization of the 1991 unilateral United States and Russian declarations; some additional unilateral actions by the United States and the Russian Federation.

20. While recognizing that the issue was essentially one which involved only the United States and the Russian Federation, the Board underlined that discussions should include the other nuclear-weapon States, taking into account their particular situations.

21. The possibility of introducing some form of confidence-building measures in South Asia dealing with these weapons was raised. The relevance of the subject to the Central Asian nuclear-weapons-free zone was also underlined, in that it might preclude the introduction of tactical nuclear weapons in the region.

22. In June, Mr. Potter expressed special concern over the highly secretive meeting of the Russian Security Council on 29 April 1999, at which it appeared to analysts that a decision at the highest level had been taken to develop short-range nuclear weapons. The Russian military exercises in June 1999 had also placed emphasis on tactical nuclear forces. Pending the outcome of the elections in the Russian

Federation, it was possible that the Government could rescind its unilateral declarations of 1991 made in parallel with the United States with respect to the reduction of tactical nuclear weapons. Mr. Potter thus proposed several ways to raise the level of awareness of the issue of tactical nuclear weapons: a motion could be taken up by the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session for the convening of an expert panel or group on sub-strategic nuclear weapons; the Department for Disarmament Affairs could sponsor an expert group on the issue that would report through the Secretary-General to the General Assembly; or the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research could be commissioned to carry out a study. The Board did not take a position on any of these suggestions, but the Institute had included such a project in its programme of work for 2000.

E. Ban on the production of fissile material for weapons purposes

23. At its first session, based on an informal paper by Harald Müller, Director of the Peace Research Institute in Frankfurt, Germany, the Board stressed that, even though a ban on the production of fissile material for weapons purposes would not end with the dismantling of any nuclear warheads, it would nonetheless be an important achievement in the disarmament field. The Board emphasized that a convention would significantly contribute to the implementation of the "principles and objectives" decision agreed upon at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT Treaty). It would have an effect on the separation of the civilian and military production cycles, would generate more transparency concerning fissile material stocks and would lessen the current discrepancy between nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States.

24. The Board stressed that it was essential to keep the regional dimension in mind, in particular to assess the main difficulties the negotiations would have to face in the coming years (East Asia, the Middle East and South Asia all pose specific problems in that regard). The five nuclear-weapon States were not in the same situation themselves, owing to the very different quantities of nuclear material each had accumulated. Countries such as the Russian Federation and China have integrated civilian and military production cycles, posing specific problems for the future verification regime.

25. It was emphasized that the transfer of fissile materials from the military to the civilian sectors should be an irreversible process. Furthermore, two views of the verification regime (broad and narrow) could be contemplated. They have both political, non-proliferation and financial implications.

F. Biological weapons

26. Two informal papers by Peter Goosen, Director for Non-Proliferation and Disarmament of the Department of Foreign Affairs of South Africa, and Hanan Bar-On, Senior Adviser at the Weizmann, Institute of Science in Rehovot, Israel, set the stage for the Board's discussions on the subject of biological weapons.

27. The extent of the coming threat concerning deliberate disease was a subject of much debate. On the one hand, in twentieth century warfare, biological weapons have hardly ever been employed, making any assessment of their potency or military utility speculative. On the other, new trends, among them common features shared by biotechnology and the information industry, both geographically widespread, could open new avenues to the military use of biological weapons.

28. On the eve of the twenty-first century, heightened vigilance might be prudent for the following reasons: there have been revelations of major clandestine biological weapons programmes; available expertise resulting from a possible brain drain from Russia; easy concealment of such weapons; advances in science and technology solving some of the most difficult problems encountered so far (safe stockpiling, dispersal and protection of one's own troops and civilian populations); and finally, the use of biological weapons by a State or a non-State actor on an unprotected civilian population, agriculture and livestock, which has the potential to produce a major disaster.

29. The challenges of creating a verification regime were clearly perceived: the dual use nature of biological research and agents; the small size of laboratories; difficulties in differentiation between defensive and offensive research and development; and natural epidemics from a biological weapons attack. Detection methods, however, are also improving in a field where early detection was essential.

30. Taking those challenges into account, the need to set up a verification regime was not questioned. It would constitute a significant improvement over the current situation; it would help build confidence and allay baseless allegations; and it would make the production of biological weapons a more complex undertaking. The participation of industry, which had been so decisive in the success of the Convention on Chemical Weapons, was underlined.

31. Additional measures could usefully supplement the future verification regime, including a code of conduct for scientists and criminalization of the threat or use of biological weapons.

32. Finally, concerning terrorist activities using biological weapons, although the issue should not be overdramatized, and though the probability that biological weapons would be used in a terrorist attack appears today to be rather low, it is nevertheless true that only one successful terrorist attack using such weapons could have devastating consequences. This combination (low probability/high risk) justifies some concern, especially in a world where violence seems to be on the increase.

G. Missile defences

33. Using as a starting point an informal paper presented by Miguel Marín Bosch, Consul General of Mexico in Barcelona, the Board examined the possible consequences on the disarmament agenda of the complex issue of missile defences.

34. The Board viewed the issue of missile defence as an old issue dressed in new clothes. Early designs for a missile defence system emerged in the 1950s. The 1972 Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems permitted the deployment of missile defences at two sites, one of which could be at the national capital. In 1976, the United States and the Soviet Union agreed to modify the treaty to limit each side to one site. In 1995, the two sides agreed to new treaty interpretations designed to permit the development of theatre missile defence within the terms of the existing treaty. The new strategic situation was central to the current issue, since the projected development of ballistic missile defence in the United States was likely to increase the already growing imbalance between the United States and the Russian Federation.

35. The trend towards ballistic missile defence would be difficult to reverse because the political support in the United States for its development was considerable; large investments had already been made and committed to further research and development; and the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty was often perceived as an obsolete arms control agreement preventing the protection of the territory of the United States. This should not prevent States from clearly indicating to the United States the possible complications for international security and disarmament that may result from the introduction of ballistic missile defence.

36. The development of ballistic missile defence could have substantial consequences for arms control: it would further threaten strategic stability; defences would stimulate offensive counteractions and undermine incentives to reduce offensive arms; and the unilateral introduction of ballistic missile defence risked replacing multilateral arms control agreements. If the major powers do not rapidly become involved in discussions of long-term strategic relationships, taking into account the impact of ballistic missile defence on the evolving offense/defence equation and future arms reductions, a new arms race is likely to appear at the beginning of the next century.

37. Realistic ways should also be explored to control and reduce missile proliferation, since it could only lead more States to consider the utility of missile defences. The missile technology control regime does not fulfil the expected role of curbing missile proliferation in a significant way. The Board queried whether an international treaty was now required, but reached no agreement. The multilateralization of the 1987 Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Elimination of their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles (INF Treaty) would ban an entire category of missiles, but the proposal was not accepted either. To curtail an unfettered missile arms race was still one of the most difficult tasks facing the arms control agenda today.

38. Regional security concerns should also be acknowledged and taken into account. In particular, missile proliferation may increase the perceived need for missile defences in some countries. The solutions adopted at the tactical level, however, should contribute to regional and international peace and stability.

H. Situation in Democratic People's Republic of Korea

39. On the basis of two informal papers prepared by Sverre Lodgaard, Director of the Norwegian Institute for International Relations in Oslo, and Yoshitomo Tanaka, President of Radiopress, Inc. in Tokyo, the Board held a pointed discussion about the situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

40. The Board agreed that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was a unique case of an extremely isolated country, whose policies remained opaque, allowing all types of interpretations. No country was actually in a position to say whether the country was bent on acquisition of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons,

or was pursuing a "compensation for crisis" policy. The two scenarios had significantly different consequences.

41. The concern expressed at the regional level, notably in Japan, was an indication of how potentially disruptive the situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea could be on regional security and how far-reaching were the potential international security implications.

42. The programmes to develop weapons of mass destruction in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea were not known with precision. The nuclear situation and the country's intentions were still unclear and the country was not party to multilateral agreements on chemical and biological weapons. What was clear, nonetheless, was the steady progress being made in the development of delivery vehicles and ballistic missiles.

43. The Board shared the unanimous view that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea should meet all its obligations under the NPT Treaty and vis à vis the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). There was widespread support for the full implementation of the Agreed Framework between the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, including recent efforts to include the subject of missile development. In addition, wide support was expressed for the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO). The more the implementation of the Agreed Framework was delayed (reactor construction was picking up very slowly), the more safeguards compliance would also be delayed. The Board supported all efforts at multilateral dialogue in the region, involving all the parties concerned.

II. Improved functioning and mandate of the Board

44. Carrying forward the Board's discussion begun in June 1998, Ambassador André Erdös, the representative of the Republic of Hungary, proposed that the language of the formal mandate of the Board, adopted in 1982,[1] be readjusted to reflect its actual functions as they have been performed for more than a decade. The thrust of the amendment would be to emphasize the Board's proactive advisory role on disarmament matters over its role to advise on various aspects of studies and research. Its function to serve as the Board of Trustees for UNIDIR would remain unchanged. It would also retain its role of advising on the implementation of the Disarmament Information Programme, though the Board believed that function needed to be more thoroughly reviewed in future.

45. The proposed mandate would read as follows:

"(a) To advise the Secretary-General on matters within the area of arms limitation and disarmament, including on studies and research under the auspices of the United Nations or institutions within the United Nations system;

"(b) To serve as the Board of Trustees of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR);

"(c) To advise the Secretary-General on the implementation of the United Nations Disarmament Information Programme."

46. I endorse the above recommendation of the Board and recommend that the General Assembly approve the change of language in the mandate to reflect the current practice of the Board.

III. Discussion with members of the Special NGO Committees on Disarmament in Geneva and New York.

47. At the Geneva session in January, the Board invited three representatives from the non-governmental organizations community active in the field of disarmament affairs to address the role of civil society in achieving disarmament, nuclear and biological issues and small arms. At the New York meeting in June, Ambassador Jonathan Dean of the Union of Concerned Scientists presented for discussion a paper entitled "Global Action to Prevent War: A Coalition-Building Effort to Stop War, Genocide and Other Forms of Deadly Conflict".[2] The paper presented a comprehensive project addressing all aspects of organized violence, uniting the challenges of poverty reduction, human rights violations, environmental destruction and discrimination based on race, gender, ethnicity, religion and the violent expressions of conflict.

IV. Future work

48. As at the June session of the Advisory Board, discussion of substantive items was limited to one per day and this initiative was welcomed by all members who agreed that the practice should be continued. The Board also reiterated its conviction that it would be useful, from time

to time, to receive briefings by recognized high-level experts on specific questions.

49. The following issues were suggested for the agenda of future meetings:

(a) Small arms (in view of the international conference on illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons in 2001);

(b) Nuclear disarmament issues;

(c) Information security;

(d) Education as a disarmament tool;

(e) Terrorism using weapons of mass destruction;

(f) Revolution in military affairs.

Notes

[1] Pursuant to section III of General Assembly resolution 37/99 K of 13 December 1982, the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters has the following functions:

(a) To advise the Secretary-General on various aspects of studies and research in the area of arms limitation and disarmament carried out under the auspices of the United Nations or institutions within the United Nations system, in particular on the integration of a programme of such studies with a comprehensive programme of disarmament, once this had been established;

(b) To serve as the Board of Trustees of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR);

(c) To advise the Secretary-General on the implementation of the United Nations Disarmament Information Programme;

(d) At the specific invitation of the Secretary-General, to provide him with advice on other matters within the area of disarmament and arms limitation.

[2] Mr. Dean, together with Ms. Randall Forsberg of the Centre for Defence Studies and Mr. Sol Mendlowitz of Rutgers University, authored the Global Action Plan.

Annex

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Mr. Hanan **Bar-On**[a b]
Ambassador
Senior Adviser to the President
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Ms. Thérèse **Delpech**[a b]
Director for Strategic Affairs
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Paris

Mr. Rolf **Ekéus**[a b]
Ambassador of Sweden to
the United States
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Mr. André **Erdös**[a b]
Ambassador Extraordinary and
Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative of the
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Mr. Nabil **Fahmy**[a b]
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Mr. **Sha** Zukang[a b]
Director-General, Department of Arms Control and Disarmament
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
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Notes

[a] Participated in the thirty-second session, 20–22 January 1999.

[b] Participated in the thirty-third session, 28–30 June 1999.

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Fifty-fourth session
Item 18 of the provisional agenda *
Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism

Report of the Secretary-General

1. During its forty-sixth session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 46/181 of 19 December 1991 and the proposals contained in the annex to the report of the Secretary-General of 13 December 1991 (A/46/634/Rev.1) to serve as the plan of action for the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism. In section VII of the annex, entitled "Coordination, review, appraisal and reporting", the General Assembly decided that:

> "27. The Secretary-General should submit to the General Assembly every three years during the Decade a report on action taken, as well as on suggestions and trends that emerge from the deliberations of United Nations organs and the specialized agencies on implementation of the plan of action.
>
> "28. The Secretary-General should submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session a final report on the achievements of the Decade."

2. The present progress report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 27 above. Information on specific activities in the context of the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism may be found in the annual reports of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.[1] The Special Committee, the policy-making organ of the General Assembly regarding decolonization, has been at the forefront of United Nations efforts to implement the plan of action for the International Decade. In this connection, during the past few years, the activities carried out by the Special Committee in pursuance of its programme of work have included efforts to encourage the cooperation and participation of Member States, particularly the administering Powers, organizations of the United Nations system and intergovernmental organizations, the specialized agencies and international institutions, to work towards achieving the objectives of the International Decade and to extend all necessary assistance to the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories in response to the various resolutions of the General Assembly.

3. The Special Committee has carried out a review of the situation in each of the Non-Self-Governing Territories each year, based on the information transmitted by the administering Powers under Article 73 *e* of the Charter of the United Nations and on information provided by the representatives of the Non-Self-Governing Territories at the hearings and the regional seminars held by the Special Committee.

4. Regional seminars were held by the Special Committee in the Caribbean and the Pacific regions in alternate years to review the progress achieved in the implementation of the plan of action. The seminars included the participation of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories, their elected

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representatives, the administering Powers, Member States, regional organizations, the specialized agencies, non-governmental organizations and experts. Nine regional seminars have been held to date: Vanuatu (1990), Barbados (1990), Grenada (1992), Papua New Guinea (1993 and 1996), Trinidad and Tobago (1995), Antigua and Barbuda (1997), Fiji (1998) and St. Lucia (1999).

5. The Economic and Social Council has considered the question of the implementation of the Declaration by the specialized agencies and other United Nations organizations every year and has adopted resolutions asking the specialized agencies to examine and review conditions in each Territory so as to take appropriate measures to accelerate progress in economic and social sectors of the Territories. Furthermore, in an ongoing effort to strengthen coordinated action, the President of the Economic and Social Council and the Chairman of the Special Committee have held consultations to consider ways and means of strengthening international assistance for economic and social development to the Non-Self-Governing Territories. Reports on these consultations and on the activities of the United Nations Development Programme, the specialized agencies and other United Nations organizations with regard to assistance they provide to the Non-Self-Governing Territories have been submitted annually by the Secretary-General and the President of the Economic and Social Council.[2]

6. In the context of the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, information on decolonization has been disseminated through all available media, including publications, radio and television, as well as the Internet, to publicize the work of the United Nations in this field, particularly that of the Special Committee. Information about the International Decade and on the regional seminars convened by the Special Committee on questions related to the Non-Self-Governing Territories has been made available through press releases and by electronic means to United Nations information centres and services worldwide. A detailed account of these activities is presented annually by the Department of Public Information to the Special Committee, which in turn devotes a section of its report to the General Assembly to the question of the dissemination of information on decolonization.[1]

7. In accordance with paragraph 28 quoted above, which forms part of the plan of action of the International Decade, it is my intention to present a detailed final report on the achievements of the Decade to the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session. The report will include a review of the action taken during the Decade as well as the trends that have emerged from the deliberations of United Nations organs and the specialized agencies on the implementation of the plan of action, in consultation with and with the cooperation of member States, other organizations of the United Nations system, the specialized agencies and other international institutions.

Notes

[1] A/46/23, A/47/23, A/48/23, A/49/23, A/50/23, A/51/23, A/52/23, A/53/23 and A/54/23.

[2] A/46/229, A/47/281, A/48/224 and Add.1, A/49/216, A/50/212, A/51/212, A/52/185, A/53/130 and Corr.1, A/54/119, E/1991/116, E/1992/85, E/1993/98, E/1994/114, E/1995/85, E/1996/85, E/1997/81 and Add.1, E/1998/76 and E/1999/69.

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Fifty-fourth session
Item 37 of the provisional agenda*
Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development

Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The World Summit for Social Development was held from 6 to 12 March 1995 at Copenhagen, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 47/92. The Summit adopted the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action on Social Development, which represent a new consensus on the need to place social development as the highest priority on the political agenda of Governments, and to put people at the centre of development.

Since 1995, the General Assembly has considered the item "Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development" at its fiftieth, fifty-first, fifty-second and fifty-third sessions. In its resolution 53/28, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to it at its fifty-fourth session on the implementation of the outcome of the Summit.

The present report contains updated information on the implementation of the outcome of the Summit by intergovernmental bodies, and on preparations for the special session of the General Assembly on the implementation of the outcome of the Summit and further initiatives, which will take place from 26 to 30 June 2000 at the United Nations Office at Geneva. It also contains references to reports and resolutions which have been issued and adopted on the subject since September 1998.

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I. Introduction

1. In March 1995, 186 Governments, of which 117 were at the level of heads of State or Government, gathered at Copenhagen for the holding of the World Summit for Social Development. They pledged to put social development as the highest priority on their political agenda, and adopted the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and Programme of Action, which contained principles, goals, commitments and recommended actions, and were endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 50/161.

2. Since the Summit, the General Assembly has considered annually an item on the implementation of the outcome of the Summit at plenary sessions, at which representatives of Governments have come together to report on national implementation and to share their views on the subject. This is the fifth annual report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the outcome of the Summit, and has been prepared pursuant to resolution 53/28. Previous reports submitted by the Secretary-General to the Assembly were contained in documents A/50/670, A/51/348, A/52/305 and A/53/211. The present report provides an overview of intergovernmental and other follow-up activities taken during the year 1999.

II. Special session of the General Assembly on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and further initiatives

3. The Summit called upon the General Assembly to hold a special session in the year 2000 for an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of its outcome, and to consider further action and initiatives. That proposal was endorsed by the Assembly in its resolution 50/161.

4. By its resolution 53/28, the General Assembly welcomed the offer of the Government of Switzerland to convene the special session at the United Nations Office at Geneva, and decided that the session would be held at Geneva from 26 to 30 June 2000.

III. Preparatory process

5. With regard to preparatory process for the special session in its resolution 51/202, the Assembly decided that the Commission for Social Development, as the functional commission of the Economic and Social Council with the primary responsibility for follow-up to the Summit and for review of the implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action, would undertake work in 1999 and 2000 for the preparations of the special session.

6. Furthermore, in its resolution 52/25, the Assembly established a Preparatory Committee, open to the participation of all States Members of the United Nations and members of the specialized agencies, with the participation of observers in accordance with the established practice of the Assembly. The Assembly also decided that the Committee would hold its organizational session in May 1998 and initiate its substantive activities in 1999.

7. At its organizational session, held in New York from 19 to 22 May 1998, the Preparatory Committee adopted a number of decisions on the objectives of the special session; issues to be addressed at future sessions of the Preparatory Committee; coordination with the Commission for Social Development; role of the United Nations system; mobilization of voluntary resources; participation of non-governmental organizations; and arrangements for future sessions. It also decided to hold its first substantive session in New York from 17 to 28 May 1999 and its second substantive session from 3 to 14 April 2000, also in New York.

IV. Objectives of the special session

8. It will be recalled that the Preparatory Committee decided and the General Assembly reiterated that the objectives of the special session will be to reaffirm the Declaration and the Programme of Action agreed at the Summit and not to renegotiate them; to identify progress made and constraints therein, as well as lessons learned, in the implementation of the Declaration and the Programme of Action at the national, regional and international levels; and to recommend concrete actions and initiatives to further efforts towards full and effective implementation of the Declaration and the Programme of Action.

A. Preliminary assessment of the implementation of the outcome of the Summit

9. At the thirty-seventh session of the Commission for Social Development and at the first substantive session of the Preparatory Committee, the Secretary-General submitted

reports on the preliminary assessment of the implementation of the outcome of the Summit (E/CN.5/1999/4 and A/AC.253/7). These reports were prepared in response to the Preparatory Committee's request to the Secretary-General to submit a report focusing on the implementation of the 10 commitments, including the three core issues, at the national, regional and international levels.

10. Those reports, written four years after the adoption of the Copenhagen Declaration, attempted to observe changes in policy trends, although that period was too short to register dramatic changes in specific indicators of social progress. The reports contained information on activities taken at the national, regional and international levels, and attempted to identify the main trends in policy-making that would indicate progress towards the fulfilment of the commitments adopted at Copenhagen. An attempt was also made to assess the implementation process according to the 10 commitments. The reports drew primarily on information available in the United Nations system, particularly in reports prepared by the regional commissions, the funds and programmes, the specialized agencies, including the Bretton Woods institutions, and other intergovernmental institutions, such as the regional development banks and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. Information furnished by Governments since the Summit was also used.

11. The reports concluded with the observations that the implementation process of the goals reached at Copenhagen have been progressing at various degrees of speed and success. In several countries, there have been positive signs of change in policy orientation in relation to paying renewed attention to the problem of unemployment and poverty. However, much more needs to be done.

12. The review also highlighted the fact that several of the targets specified in the Programme of Action will not be met within the period agreed, and in some instances there have been severe setbacks. Also, progress observed in the fight against unemployment and poverty has been eroded by the severe economic difficulties experienced in several countries, which were brought about by the financial crisis and related development. There is also concern that the recent emphasis in financial and economic policies has not always been development-oriented, that the dominance of a limited set of macroeconomic targets and parameters over the social, political, cultural and environmental domains has gone too far, and that social and economic policies and objectives must be fully integrated.

B. Further initiatives for the implementation of the outcome of the Summit

13. The Secretary-General submitted two reports on the subject — to the Commission for Social Development at its thirty-seventh session in February 1999 (E/CN.5/1999/3), and to the Preparatory Committee at its first substantive session, in May 1999 (A/AC.253/8).

14. These reports, prepared to facilitate consideration by the Commission and the Committee on this topic, discussed issues of current international concern and proposed possible areas that could be addressed under each of the 10 commitments adopted at Copenhagen. In the view of the Secretary-General, there was a crucial need to identify priorities and mandate the elaboration of a few specific initiatives to be discussed and agreed upon before the special session. Sixteen issues were listed on which the special session might wish to focus.

V. First substantive session of the Preparatory Committee

15. The first substantive session of the Preparatory Committee for the special session took place from 17 to 28 May 1999 in New York. It conducted a preliminary review and appraisal of the implementation of the outcome of the Summit, and considered further actions and initiatives to implement the commitments made at the Summit. The 10 commitments contained in the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development provided the framework for discussion.[1]

16. The Committee adopted a number of decisions which will be brought to the attention of the Assembly at its fifty-fourth session, as described below.

Arrangements for the special session

17. The Committee recommended, *inter alia*, that the Assembly invite Member States to participate in its special session at the highest political level possible, and decide that the special session should have a Plenary and an Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole.

Title of the special session

18. The Preparatory Committee recommended to the Assembly that the special session be entitled "World Summit for Social Development and beyond: achieving social development for all in a globalizing world".

Accreditation and modalities for participation of non-governmental organizations in the special session

19. The Committee deferred consideration of this subject to the inter-sessional open-ended consultations, to be held from 30 August to 3 September 1999.

Role of the United Nations system

20. The Committee invited all relevant organs and specialized agencies of the United Nations system and other concerned organizations to elaborate and submit review reports and proposals for further action and initiatives, and requested the Secretary-General to make available those reports and proposals to the Preparatory Committee at its second substantive session, in April 2000, and where appropriate, to the Commission for Social Development at its thirty-eighth session, in February 2000. These requests, totalling 25, were made under each of the 10 commitments adopted by the Summit, and will serve as the basis for discussion and decisions by the Preparatory Committee at its second session (see A/AC.253/L.7/Rev.1).

21. The funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations system, including the Bretton Woods institutions, as well as any other organizations which have been requested to provide reports, studies or documentation to the Preparatory Committee at its second substantive session, were requested to make that work available to the Secretary-General no later than 1 January 2000; each of the documents submitted should contain a concise summary of conclusions on the assessment of issues and proposals for further action.

22. Also, in response to the call by the Preparatory Committee to contribute to and be actively involved in the preparatory process and the special session by, *inter alia*, submitting proposals for further actions and initiatives, a number of funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations system submitted reports to the Preparatory Committee at its first substantive session in this regard (see A/AC.253/9 and Add.1–10).

Further preparations for the special session

23. The Preparatory Committee also decided to adopt a set of procedures for preparation of the outcome of the special session, including an indicative calendar for the period leading up to the second substantive session in April 2000, to ensure the best possible preparation of that session (see A/AC.253/L.8).

24. It requested the Secretary-General to arrange for the convening of two inter-sessional, open-ended informal consultations of the Committee during the week of 30 August to 3 September 1999, and 22 to 25 February 2000 in order to consider further the Chairman's working draft texts.

25. The Committee also invited the Commission for Social Development, at its thirty-eighth session, in February 2000, to undertake the overall review of the implementation of the outcome of the Summit, and to transmit the results of its deliberations to the Preparatory Committee at its second substantive session, in April 2000.

VI. Commission for Social Development, thirty-seventh session

26. The thirty-seventh session of the Commission for Social Development was held in New York from 9 to 19 February 1999. It considered two priority themes under its restructured agenda and multi-year programme of work: "Social services for all" and "Initiation of the overall review of the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development". To assist the Commission in its work, the Secretariat convened two workshops of independent international experts on the themes "Ensuring access to social services of under-served populations" and "Innovations in the delivery and financing of social services". Reports on these workshops, as well as the report of the Secretary-General on social services for all, were submitted to the Commission (see E/CN.5/1999/6, E/CN.5/1999/7 and E/CN.5/1999/2).

27. Special presentations were made by the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund on the theme "Education for all". The Commission also held an expert panel discussion on the priority theme "Social services for all", followed by an exchange of views between the panellists and the Commission.

28. The Commission adopted resolution 37/1, entitled "Social services for all", and decided to adopt agreed conclusions on the topic and transmit them to the Preparatory Committee at its first substantive session, in May 1999, and to the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1999. The agreed conclusions contain analysis and recommendations for action to promote the efficient and effective delivery of social services for all as a contribution to overall social development. They set out general principles and goals, suggest priorities for delivery and

provision of social services, discuss the need for partnership between Governments and the other social actors, stress the importance of information, encourage the mobilization of resources and establish parameters for international cooperation for social services.

29. Concerning the second priority theme of "Initiation of overall review of the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development", the Commission had before it two reports of the Secretary-General, on further initiatives for the implementation of the outcome of the Summit (E/CN.5/1999/3) and on preliminary assessment of the implementation of the outcome of the Summit (E/CN.5/1999/4). The Commission held general discussions on these two aspects, and adopted resolution 37/3, in which it invited Governments to provide additional inputs, in particular proposals concerning possible further initiatives, to the Preparatory Committee to facilitate its work at its first substantive session. The Secretary-General was also requested to update the two reports on the preliminary assessment of and on further initiatives for the implementation of the outcome of the Summit, before their presentation to the Preparatory Committee at its first substantive session, in May 1999, reflecting the proposals and suggestions made during the discussions in the Commission, as well as any additional inputs submitted by Governments.

VII. Economic and Social Council, substantive session of 1999

30. The substantive session of 1999 of the Economic and Social Council was held at Geneva from 5 to 30 July 1999. The high-level segment was devoted to the theme "The role of employment and work in poverty eradication: the empowerment and advancement of women". The ministerial communiqué adopted by ministers and heads of delegations participating in the high-level policy dialogue and the high-level segment,[2] reaffirmed the commitment made at the World Summit for Social Development to the goal of eradicating poverty in the world through decisive national actions and international cooperation, and the commitment made at the Fourth World Conference on Women to promote women's economic independence, including employment, and to eradicate the persistent and increasing burden of poverty on women.

31. In the communiqué, Governments recognized that productive employment plays a central role in poverty eradication, and that the mainstreaming of a gender perspective into all policies aimed at poverty eradication and employment creation, including through gender impact analysis, is all the more crucial since women constitute the majority of people living in poverty. Accordingly, they undertook to adopt effective poverty eradication strategies that address employment creation and gender-specific policies, which must be designed to address the conditions and needs of women and men on equal and equitable terms, and supported by an enabling international environment. Prerequisites for effective poverty eradication and employment creation strategies include the empowerment of people, in particular the empowerment of women, including promulgation and enforcement of anti-discrimination and non-discriminatory legislation and equal employment opportunity policies; democracy, the rule of law and the promotion and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development; as well as targeting key economic sectors for employment-intensive growth, including agriculture and non-traditional sectors.

32. The communiqué further recommended that public policies avoid reduction of expenditure on health, and stressed that the literacy of women is an important key to improving health, nutrition and education in the family and to empowering women to participate in decision-making in society. Finally, the Council agreed that the international community has a key role to play in supporting efforts to eradicate poverty, promote productive employment and achieve gender equality, and that the mobilization of new and additional financial resources from all sources, national and international, is required. It also called upon the relevant organizations of the United Nations system to take consistent, coherent, coordinated and joint actions in support of national efforts to eradicate poverty, with particular attention to employment creation and work and the empowerment and advancement of women.

33. The Economic and Social Council also considered at its substantive session of 1999 the item "Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits". In its resolution 1999/__,[3] the Council addressed ways to enhance the integrated and coordinated follow-up to conferences; basic indicators for the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits at all levels; and modalities of a review by the Council in 2000 of progress made in the promotion of an integrated and coordinated implementation and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits.

34. On ways to enhance the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits, the Council called upon

Governments, at the national and international levels, to renew their efforts to implement the commitments that they have undertaken and make more tangible progress towards the targets, goals and objectives set by these conferences. It decided to transmit to the General Assembly, as inputs to the five-year reviews of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the World Summit for Social Development, the Council's outcome on the role of employment and work in poverty eradication: the empowerment and advancement of women; operational activities, in particular poverty eradication and capacity-building; and the coordination of implementation and coordinated follow-up by the United Nations system of initiatives on African development. It called for further cooperation between the functional commissions and the rest of the United Nations system in order to complement United Nations conferences and summits in a coherent way, and encouraged the functional commissions, in their outcomes, to identify more clearly actions that require a coordinated United Nations system-wide response.

35. Recognizing the importance of relevant, accurate and timely statistics and indicators for evaluating the implementation of the outcomes of the United Nations conferences and summits at all levels, the Council invited the Statistical Commission, in close cooperation with other relevant bodies of the United Nations system and other relevant international organizations, to review the work undertaken in harmonizing and rationalizing basic indicators in the context of follow-up to United Nations conferences and summits.

36. Finally, the Council decided to assess, at the coordination segment of its substantive session of 2000, the progress made within the United Nations system, through the conference reviews, in the promotion of an integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields as a possible contribution to the Millennium Assembly.

VIII. National reporting

37. At its organizational session, in May 1998, the Preparatory Committee requested the Secretary-General to submit to it, at its second session, in 2000, a comprehensive document assessing the overall level of implementation of the outcome of the Summit, including the identification of constraints, obstacles and successes and lessons learned, as well as recommendations on further actions and initiatives at the national and international levels. To assist the Secretary-General in the preparation of the report, the Committee requested the Secretary-General to formulate general guidelines and a structure and common framework for national reporting on the progress made and obstacles encountered, and to invite Governments to provide information as soon as possible. Accordingly, these guidelines were prepared and forwarded to Governments in October 1998, with a deadline for responses of 30 June 1999.

38. As of the date of the present report, the Secretariat has received over 50 national reports, and work is now well under way in preparing the comprehensive report, to be submitted to the Commission for Social Development in February 2000 and to the Preparatory Committee in April 2000.

IX. Status of preparations for the special session

39. In a note submitted to the Preparatory Committee at its first substantive session (A/AC.253/6), the Secretariat provided an update on the preparatory process and the main activities undertaken between May 1998 and April 1999, including, *inter alia*, participation of non-governmental organizations, mobilization of voluntary resources, preparatory work carried out by the Secretariat, and arrangements for the special session.

40. The Secretariat also reported that it has been working closely with the Government of Switzerland, and holds regular consultations and discussions on arrangements for the special session and other relevant issues.

X. Non-governmental organizations

41. The interest shown by non-governmental organizations in the work of the Commission for Social Development and in the preparatory process of the special session has markedly increased since the holding of the Summit in 1995: in 1996, 49 NGOs attended the special session of the Commission; by 1999, the number of NGOs which attended the thirty-seventh session of the Commission, in February 1999, reached 113. At the first session of the Preparatory Committee, in May 1999, 131 NGOs sent representatives. Many NGOs have expressed great interest in participating at the special session and holding side events. It is anticipated that the number of NGOs attending the second session of the Preparatory Committee and the special session itself will progressively increase.

XI. Concluding observation

42. As preparation of the special session of the General Assembly on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and further initiatives is gathering momentum, the involvement of all actors involved in social development is essential. The challenge of the special session is to identify and agree on further initiatives to move forward the goals set at the Summit.

Notes

[1] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 45* (A/54/45).

[2] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 3* (A/54/3); see also E/1999/L.21.

[3] See also E/1999/L.57.